

Message Text

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ACTION EB-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SOE-02 AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00

COME-00 DODE-00 DOE-11 H-02 INR-10 INT-05 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 OMB-01 PM-05 USIA-15 OES-07 SP-02

SS-15 STR-07 TRSE-00 ACDA-12 CEQ-01 EPA-04 IO-14

NSF-02 PA-02 /152 W

-----024594 242123Z /72

P 241930Z FEB 78

FM AMCONSUL VANCOUVER

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4056

INFO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

ALL CANADIAN CONGENS POUCH

UNCLAS VANCOUVER 0250

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ENRG, CA

SUBJECT: ENERGY: WEST COAST OIL PORT

1. WEST COAST OIL PORTS COMMISSION COUNSEL RUSSELL ANTHONY WAS INTERVIEWED AT LENGTH EVENING OF FEBRUARY 23 ("B.C. NEWS MAKERS" TV PROGRAM) REGARDING ENVIRONMENT MINISTER MARCHAND'S SURPRISE ANNOUNCEMENT THAT THE GOC SEES NO NEED FOR AN OIL PORT "NOW OR IN THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE." NOTHING THAT MARCHAND HAD BEEN SOMEWHAT TENTATIVE IN HIS STATEMENT, ANTHONY EXPRESSED HIS VIEW THAT THE PORT PROPOSAL COULD BE REVIVED WITHIN THE NEXT YEAR. ANTHONY CITED THE SEEMING HASTE AND CASUALNESS OF THE GOC ANNOUNCEMENT TO THE PRESS AND THE LACK OF A PREPARED REPORT AND FORMAL DECISION BY OTTAWA BASED UPON A CAREFUL REVIEW OF THE FINDINGS OF THE THOMPSON INQUIRY. HE NOTED THAT NEB IS STILL UNDER FEDERAL INSTRUCTION TO CONTINUE ITS EXAMINATION OF THE NEED FOR AN OIL PORT AND, THUS, THE GOC WAS STILL LEAVING THE DOOR OPEN FOR A PORT AT KITIMAT.

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2. ALTHOUGH NOT SPECIFICALLY SAYING SO, ANTHONY IMPLIED THAT THE GOC ACTION WAS TAKEN FOR PURPOSES OF CLOSING DOWN THE WIDE-RANGING THOMPSON INQUIRY. ANTHONY DEFENDED THE INQUIRY'S PROCEDURES AND THE HIGH COST OF THE COMMISSION AS NECESSARY TO CARRYING OUT ITS MANDATE TO EXAMINE FULLY THE SOCIOLOGICAL, ENVIRONMENTAL AND ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF AN OIL PORT.

3. ANTHONY SUGGESTED THAT BETWEEN NOW AND FEBRUARY 1979, WHEN THE USG BY CONGRESSIONAL DIRECTION MUST DECIDE UPON A WEST COAST OIL PORT, THE GOC MAY FIND A NEED FOR A PORT AT KITIMAT AND THEN RUSH THROUGH AN INQUIRY IN A TIGHT TIME FRAME A LA THE LYSYK INQUIRY INTO THE NATURAL GAS PIPELINE ROUTE.

4. IN REPORTING GOC DECISION, VANCOUVER PROVINCE OF FEBRUARY 24 CARRIED HEADLINE "GOV T SMASHES KITIMAT OIL PORT SCHEME." PROVINCE STATES MARCHAND SAID HIS ANNOUNCEMENT WAS DELAYED SLIGHTLY BECAUSE HE TOLD THE U.S. EMBASSY OF THE DECISION. HE ADDED, ACCORDING TO NEWS REPORT, THAT AMERICANS SHOULD NOT BE SURPRISED BECAUSE HE TOLD U.S. AMBASSADOR TWO MONTHS AGO THAT HE PERSONALLY OPPOSED THE PROPOSAL.
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